



## Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association OFFICIALS' COMMITTEE MEETING

April 20, 2020 5pm

*Due to Declaration of State of Emergency by Governor's Office  
per COVID-19 Restrictions - Video Conference Held*

### WELCOME, INTRODUCTION & ROLL CALL - Chris Muscara

#### In Attendance:

- ✓ Chris Muscara, Chairman
- ✓ Chris Nutter, DLOS/DSOA
- ✓ Pete Celiberti, DFOA
- ✓ Mike Hart, DAAD President
- ✓ Joe Thomson, DISC
- ✓ Pat Jones, DISC
- ✓ Chris Eddy, DSC
- ✓ Nick Pegelow, Henlopen Conference
- ✓ Donna Polk, DIAA

#### Not Present:

- Vicki Rhodes, SDFHOA - Joined @ 6pm
- Steve Yiengst
- Tim Finley, DSOA - Resigned via email 2/16/20

### I. Opening:

1. Call to Order by Chair Chris Muscara at 5:10pm
2. Agenda Review and Approval - Joe Thompson made a motion to approve the meeting's agenda. The motion was seconded by Mike Hart and carried unanimously (7-yes, 0 no Eddy, Hart, Jones, Muscara, Nutter, Pegelow, Thomson).

### II. Committee Roster Update – Chris Muscara

1. Mr. Muscara explained the process he went through after being approved by the DIAA Board to serve as Chair of the Officials Committee in September Board Meeting.
2. Via call, text, email Muscara contacted all members of previous committee asking if they would like to remain on the committee to see out their approved term. Muscara reminded them of when their term was up per the information given to him by DIAA and Donna Polk.
3. Any previous committee members who chose to resign their positions, were asked to contact Donna Polk at the DIAA office to officially resign so that their positions on the committee could be listed as vacant and new members could apply by visiting the DIAA website to fill out committee application.
4. Currently there are 5 vacant positions on the committee and all interested applicants should visit DIAA website to complete online application. It was recommended by Muscara that they reach out to him via call, text, or email so that he was aware to look for applications to get them forwarded from the DIAA Office.

### III. Officials Committee Overview - History & Direction of the Committee - Chris Muscara

1. Mr. Muscara thanked all past committee members, officials, athletic directors, coaches, and public members who either served on the past committees or provided any input to assist the committee on satisfying the duties it has been charged with by DIAA. He thanked them for their help, and asked that that continue to assist the committee however possible.
2. It is the current goal of the committee to rededicate itself to establishing and reaffirming open lines of communication and rapport between all DIAA Member Schools and parties involved to continue to improve upon education-based athletics in the State of Delaware .
3. Muscara stated that he sees this committee as one of the most important standing committees in existence in DIAA as many of the decisions being made are vital to member schools as they work

to provide and manage safe and competitive environments for all DIAA sanctioned events.

#### **IV. 2019-2020 Officials Committee DIAA Agreement & Annual Organization Report - Donna Polk**

1. Officials Fee Schedule - Donna Polk, DIAA Exec. Director reported that all fees, as of now, are not scheduled to increase, but was still looking into some of the benefits and negatives of the new DragonFly interface presented by NFHS which we are discussing at later point in the meeting.
2. Annual Organization Reports - Chris Muscara
  - a. Mr. Muscara asked for any recommendations from the committee members on the timing in which officials associations should continue to send annual end of season reports to DIAA.
  - b. Joe Thompson stated that currently reports were submitted in August, November, and around March each year by associations.
  - c. Muscara asked committee if there were any issues with this format and/or if we should continue the process in place. No recommendations made for change and committee agreed to keep current process in place.
  - d. Committee would discuss at later meeting date the idea of subcommittees being needed to help interpret and organize this data, potentially provide assistance to associations, and help with reminders when agreements are being signed to submit these reports.

#### **V. Officials working games not registered by Officials Associations - Donna Polk**

1. Donna Polk reported to the committee that she had received numerous calls to the DIAA office in regard to officials who are not certified and registered according to DIAA and Association bylaws/ processes
2. Ms. Polk reminded the committee members that individual associations are required to monitor their members to ensure they follow all bylaws in place and registration requirements if they are officiating DIAA events

#### **VI. Coronavirus COVID-19 Impact on Spring Sports Regular and Championship Seasons - Donna Polk**

1. Donna Polk provided update per DIAA Spring Sports adhering to the requirements of the Governor's Office for COVID-19, and that the DIAA Board discussed and approved sanctioned play by DIAA Member Schools if they return to school mid- May.
2. She also updated the committee as to future plans coming out via DIAA Office to help display and show support for student -athletes and their families during this unprecedented time. She will communicate via email to all member schools.

#### **VII. Arbiter Update - Chris Muscara**

1. Muscara attended Arbiter's "The Huddle Conference" located in Salt Lake City, Utah Feb. 5-6, 2020 in which he met with various interscholastic athletic association members across the country as well as many members of the Arbiter Staff to discuss the future of Arbiter and their commitment to individualized customer service for each state and their organizations using Arbiter.
2. Muscara attended various breakout sessions in which he met with panels to discuss Arbiter tech support, current Arbiter products, future Arbiter updates and products coming this summer 2020, Arbiter officials' insurance updates, fees, and technical support.
3. Based off Muscara's experience both at the conference and within the past two years, his recommendation to the committee was to CONTINUE the USE of ARBITER's services as they are the industry standard.
4. Muscara also recommended in conjunction with agenda item - **FALL START-UP PRIORITIES** that we continue to work with officials' associations and their assignors to fix data exchange issues, share ideas, troubleshoot problems, and create solutions for working with Brian Rutter and websites4sports with data exchange.
  - a. Athletic Directors need to make sure that ALL of the CURRENT profile information is up to date in the Arbiter System for both contact and billing purposes
  - b. Athletic Directors need to continually check that all games are syncing via Arbiter and Websites4Sports both when we schedule the games as well as make changes.
  - c. Continued communication with assignors is encouraged and required for game changes per contracts
  - d. Committee members from various officials' associations expressed concerns about data exchange issues due to locations being uploaded in the wrong format per issue and concern last Fall

#### **VIII. DragonFly Webinar Update and Feedback - Donna Polk - (Invite Officials' Association Presidents to provide feedback via DragonFly Webinar after the committee discusses)**

1. DragonFly is new platform and NFHS sanctioned registration portal for official's registration services
2. They offer other features for administrators and officials, but any of these features outside of the official's registration portal would be the responsibility of the officials' associations to pay those fees
3. The recommendation after taking part in the DragonFly webinars is for DIAA to continue to use Arbiter for the assigning piece until more feedback is provided by other states using DragonFly
4. Ms. Polk recommended that we use DragonFly to register our officials as it is the new NFHS portal, but hold off on any new services provided by them as we monitor other local states who have completely switched over to DragonFly for the 2020 - 2021 Season
5. Delaware is a 100% state with the NFHS and part of the requirements for this process is that all officials register via NFHS portal which DragonFly now provides.
6. Being 100% state with the NFHS allows DE access to NFHS free testing platforms, officiating power points, resources for rules clinics provided by the state, physical rule books, and free connections to online rules interpreter meetings.
7. Not being an 100% state with the NFHS presents a conflict which would now require DE to pay for our tests, power points, online interpreters' meetings, and potentially not be able to nominate student- athletes for various awards provided by the NFHS

**Mike Hart, committee member, asked the following question:**

1. What the ramifications were if we did not use DragonFly via registration and assigning?
  - a. Donna Polk responded with saying that her recommendations and intentions were to only use DragonFly for official's registration piece in which officials now would be required to register via DragonFly portal instead of sending Donna information to manually input.
2. Mr. Hart also commented that officials need to embrace the fact that they have to register via DragonFly as it satisfies our requirements to continue to be 100% NFHS compliant. No questions about it, it has to be done.

**Chris Muscara reported to the committee:**

1. He was in agreement with Donna Polk's recommendations previously stated as Arbiter is the industry standard in regard to assigning and event management.
2. It has taken Arbiter 20 years to get to this point, and they continue to improve upon customer service in which they have done a much better job communicating since Feb. Conference, but still will push them as we continue to solve data exchange issues working with Brian Rutter and websites4sports.
3. DragonFly's assigning functions are not currently up and running or available to test via their website, among other items that interest him in regard to priorities for assigning.
4. Muscara also recommends that officials work to use DragonFly to register for NFHS piece, but more information is needed on learning or using other DragonFly services at this point in time.

**Donna Polk then asked to review questions emailed to her prior to the meeting in regard to the DragonFly Portal and webinar:**

1. Will officials need to register via DragonFly?
  - a. Yes, part of the agreement for championships with member schools is all officials need to be registered and would do so via DragonFly
2. Would the 3% credit card fee advertised by DragonFly be charged to officials when they register?
  - a. Yes, Donna stated that she believes the fee comes out to be around \$.55 plus another \$.30 when officials register plus \$17 NFHS fee
3. Would there be any additional costs via DragonFly when registering online?
  - a. No, just the CC fees listed previously.
4. Would officials have to register on DragonFly to be recognized for assigning?
  - a. Yes, we need to know that the official is registered before assignment
5. Is there a fee for DragonFly to send the registration \$\$\$ to Officials Association when officials register with DragonFly?
  - a. No fee if funds are sent via electronic transfer which happens in most cases, but if fees are sent to them via paper check, a \$25.00 charge would be charged.
  - b. Association fees do not need to go through DragonFly - they can remain with association unless you desire that as a part of the registration process. Fees can be separated out for NFHS/Officials Association and State Association.
6. Does DragonFly have an option to post procedures and forms with the availability to multiple parties involved?
  - a. Yes, DragonFly said that would be able to add for free as the platform is there
7. Does DIAA and DragonFly control the meet fees?
  - a. Donna would need more information about this question and would follow up directly with the person who emailed

**Pat Jones, committee member commented:**

1. Confusion created after the DragonFly webinar as their company unveiled a vast amount of information that made it look like we were switching over
2. He hopes and recommends that when the time comes, Brian Rutter from websites4sports is part of the conversation as a lot of time and energy were vested in what we have currently going for us in DE.
  - a. Donna Polk responded to Pat with letting him know that Brian is already in the conversations with DragonFly and websites4sports is not going anywhere per their services and DAAD can attest to that as well.
  - b. She reaffirmed her commitment as representative of DIAA that she does not have the power to just switch over nor would do so without seeking the recommendation and input in regard to best practices for this software of all the parties involved
3. Jones followed up with asking Donna her thoughts on the timeline of NFHS requiring 100% schools to eventually switch over and use more of DragonFly's services to be considered federation members.
  - a. Polk explained to the committee that NFHS has not released any data or information on any mandatory requirements for use of DragonFly..

**Open Forum for Officials Association Presidents to Provide Input on DragonFly:**

*Presidents asked to please state their names and the associations they are representing before they provide input*

1. **Rich Robertson on behalf of Mike Vincent for DSOA –**
  - a. 100% behind the committee's recommendations for Arbiter versus DragonFly
  - b. Does not want to be a beta tester
  - c. Value the relationship we have with Brian Rutter and the way we work together
2. **Greg Bulger – DLOA**
  - a. Support committees' recommendations
  - b. DragonFly payment system more expensive than Arbiter
  - c. Asks that if DragonFly continues to improve and the committee is looking into changing down the line that we please extend the same courtesy as we did this time for input from all the associations on making the switch
  - d. Arbiter is the industry standard and their association needs the platform to continue to officiate in other local states
3. **Jeff Smith - DE Softball Umpires Association –**
  - a. Asked the question about how DragonFly would leverage their product in regard to their association using the product with multiple softball leagues not just DIAA - Arbiter is great with this issue
  - b. Observe MD and their roll out plan, but concerned with having to use two systems
  - c. Their association needs more information on fee breakdowns and comparisons and wants to see DIAA break down to compare to their own internal breakdown
  - d. Can they still write one check for NFHS
    - i. Donna responded that she inquired with DragonFly about this and waiting to hear back an answer if the associations can send one check
    - ii. For now use DragonFly - and \$18 fee to DIAA does not need to be sent to DragonFly
4. **Joe Huggins - DE Swimming Officials –**
  - a. Who is going to pay for using Arbiter?
    - i. Whatever is currently in place – Yes
  - b. How would the officials be registered in Arbiter?
    - i. The official's associations would be responsible for doing that, but it is Donna's understanding that only new members would need to be input.
  - c. If all of the officials register on their own, how would we control who registers?
    - i. Still need excel sheet sent to Donna who would do the cross check with report from DragonFly and association spread sheets sent over
  - d. Deadlines need to be in place for all registration by officials with accommodations for late registration for mid-season added officials
5. **Randy Henzes - Board 11 Basketball –**
  - a. Confirms every official needs to register with DragonFly, Does DIAA have a feel for what the fees will now be in total?
    - i. \$18 DIAA and \$17 for NFHS
    - ii. Donna doing cost analysis breakdown for all fees which hopefully will be done by summer for all to reference but as of now, nothing will change with fees
  - b. Concern with a deadline for registering as their association constantly gets new officials all the time.
    - i. Donna understands that and will work with the committee on add on using same process

- c. Under the assumption after taking the webinar that ADs would be the ones if we used DragonFly that would have to input games and is not something, they want to do from his experience
- d. Recommendations and concerns for DIAA - Donna and Officials Committee Chair – Chris Muscara on the make-up of the committee
- e. Seems to be very AD heavy and reminded them that per the charges and by-laws - we control. It would be in our best interest to include representatives from the associations who do the most games (basketball) and work with inputting data more often than other associations
- f. Recommendation to the committee to also include an assignor because they can answer many of the questions that the committee was asking and discussing today for ADs.
- g. Recommendation to check the DIAA Regulations on what the committee's actual charges are per the DIAA Board By-laws so we do not waste with items that we have no charge and/or power to change
- 6. Jennifer Hagan - DE Women's Lacrosse Association –
  - a. Concerns with the data exchange every night that she checks due to location issues of games as she had 22 pages of import mistakes
    - i. *Donna and Jenn working with Brian Rutter to fix their issues*
  - b. Concerns about 'how to' articles provided by Arbiter not being useful or beneficial for brand new assignors
  - c. There is no current, adequate training program for new assignors when they take over

#### IV. Public Comment -

##### 1. Walt Connors

- a. States most of his comments are 'general' concerns on the make-up of the committee in relation to how each individual association works
- b. Well aware that it is not the wish of DIAA to negotiate with all the different associations producing 17 different contracts
- c. He feels it would be of great benefit for someone to have a meeting with the presidents of every association – individually or together; to make sure that each individual association/organization are negotiating for their respective groups. He reminded the committee that each association operates as an independent contractor.
- d. Recommendations for subcommittees to be created within the Officials Committee to help make sure that every year, contracts do not need to be renegotiated for every association
- e. Willing to work with DIAA and Officials Committees but there are multiple, individual issues within each associations that need to be addressed separately
- f. One standard template contract cannot work for all

##### 2. Pat Jones - Officials Committee

- a. Was under the impression that we did have representation from all of the officials committee at the table negotiating the last time they met @ Smyrna
  - i. *Donna went into the make-up of the committee and how she is looking at the governing structure of all standing committees to have the right people at the table*
  - ii. *Conversation for the committee to make a recommendation to the board and we currently do have spots to fill*

##### 3. Steve Tolliver - NDFOA President

- a. Reminded everyone that we do have an officials committee that has been withstanding for the last 14 years called the DIOC that has not met and/or had no communication over two years
- b. Why can we not use this current organization that exists for negotiating representation?
  - i. *Donna acknowledged Steve for public comment and referred him back to the current members of the DIOC to discuss and come up with recommendations for the Officials Committee*
- c. Contracts need to not be one size fit all, and the DIOC should be a forum to discuss this for officials associations

#### V. Adjournment - Chris Muscara

- 1. Motion to adjourn by Mike Hart
- 2. Second by Chris Eddy
- 3. All in favor (9 yes, 0 no) Meeting Adjourned at 6:46pm